

CHAPTER 5**Memories of an Arapaho**

(Use with Section 1, textbook pages 117–119.)

**Primary Source
Worksheet 9**

Carl Sweezy was an Arapaho Indian. He was born in 1881, shortly after his tribe was forced to settle on a reservation in Oklahoma, between the Canadian and Red rivers. Although he adopted white customs, he spent his life painting the old ways of the Arapaho. Before his death in 1953, Sweezy told his life story to a friend, Althea Bass, who recorded and published it.

... A boy growing up today has no way of knowing how good life was on the Cheyenne-Arapaho Reservation when I was a boy, or what that life was like, unless he reads about it in books. Even if he should read books about our life, he would miss something. Books could not make him see the sun rising over the land that stretched for miles without fences or roads ... or feel how friendly the life in our villages was, with children and dogs and ponies outside the tepees, and men and women busy drying meat or beading moccasins or making arrows or dressing skins. But I am an old man who can remember all this from my boyhood. ... The road of the Arapaho was an old and good one, and we believed it had been travelled since the beginning of the world. Now, though we can no longer travel it, it is a good thing to show how that road once ran before we lost it. ...

We had everything to learn about the white man's road. We had come to a country that was new to us, where wind and rain and rivers and heat and cold and even some of the plants and animals were different from what we had always known. We had to learn to live by farming

instead of by hunting and trading; we had to learn from people who did not speak our language or try to learn it, except for a few words, though they expected us to learn theirs. We had to learn to cut our hair short, and to wear close-fitting clothes made of dull-colored cloth, and to live in houses, though we knew that our long braids of hair and embroidered robes and moccasins and tall, round lodges were more beautiful. ...

Also the Arapaho had always lived in bands, with their tepees side by side, their horses grazing together, and with hunting and fighting and feasting and worship all carried on by the group. It took years to learn to work alone on a farm and see one's neighbors only once in a while. Neither we nor our dogs nor our ponies understood this new way of the white people. To us it seemed unsociable and lonely, and not the way people were meant to live. ...

From "A Long Way from the Buffalo Road" by Carl Sweezy, as told to Althea Bass, in American Heritage, October 1966, Vol. XVII, No. 6. Copyright © 1966 by American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc.

Comprehension

1. In the first paragraph, what reason does Carl Sweezy give for telling his story?
2. List the changes that the Arapaho had to make when they were moved to the reservation.

Critical Thinking

3. Which of the changes described by Sweezy was most likely the result of the Dawes Act? Use your textbook as needed to answer this question.
4. Although Sweezy accepted the white man's way of life, what was his attitude toward the Arapaho way? Use examples from the passage to support your answer.
5. Sweezy says that the white man's way did not seem the way people were meant to live. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.